T Gill

Washington
Feb. 14th 1865.

Dr Asa Gray &c

Dear Sir.

On my return from New York, I find your much esteemed favor of the 3d awaiting me. I beg to return my most hearty thanks for your kindness. As the information which you have already given meets

limits as now. The term genus was however used by him in the same way approximately as family is now, but in Botany, we find it used in a more restricted sense — the modern sense of the term. The confusion was doubtless due to the limited number of categories of dividing and the development of the term tended to its restriction. The family was then introduced ~~and gradually~~ Zoology and took the place of the old Linnean genus. In Botany, however, the genus essentially retained its original significance, while the same

my requirements, I shall not need to trespass further on your time.

Latreille was about the first to introduce in Zoology the term tribe and he subordinated it to family. To the objection that the tribe includes the family, it has been replied that though such was the case in the Roman Confederacy, among the Jews, the tribes were the subdivisions of the family, and thus the discussion becomes reduced to puerilities.

In my own investigations into Taxonomy, I have first endeavored to ascertain the mode of introduction of a given term, and then by tracing its history, have been enabled to obtain perhaps a more clear idea of what it was intended to be the embodiment. Further, I have studied more especially in those groups whose relations were best known. Thus, classes, orders and genera are alone admitted by Linnaeus, and by studying their application to the mammals — beings whose relations are necessarily best appreciated — I find that the first two categories were used by Linné with nearly the same

cause that induced the different appreciation by Linné of the term genus in Zoology & Botany originated a depreciation in Botany, we judicy of the term order. For the order or family of Botanist, it appears to me, is nearly equivalent to the family of Zoologists, while the root of a term significant of a higher value has been attempted to be met in Botany by the term "alliance" (?) I of course submit these crude reflections to you for what they are worth — As to the

meaning of the several groups, I am obliged to confess my inability to appreciate the attempted recent explanations of them, while I am still further embarrassed if I attempt to understand them by means of their application.

I have communicated to Prof. Henry your message with the highest respect, I remain

Very truly yours

Theo. Gill.